

**NORTHPORT VA
MEDICAL CENTER**

**PATIENT
HANDBOOK**

(631) 261-4400

Fall 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

A MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL CENTER DIRECTOR

I.	INTRODUCTION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD.....	1
II.	AMBULATORY CARE.....	1
	Primary Care	1
	Specialty Care	2
	Dual Care - having A VA and a non-VA doctor	3
	Women's Primary Care	4
	Hoptel	4
III.	PHARMACY SERVICES.....	5
IV.	ELIGIBILITY.....	6
	Champ-VA and Tri-Care	
V.	VETERANS BENEFITS.....	7
VI.	BILLING	8
VII.	EMERGENCY CARE.....	8
	Call 911 if you have warning signs of heart attack or stroke	
	VISN 3 Nurse Help line 1-800-877-6976	
VIII.	INPATIENT CARE.....	9
	Available services in the hospital	11
	Discharge Planning	13
	Discharge against medical advice	14
IX.	CONTINUING CARE.....	14
X.	EXTENDED CARE.....	17
	Geriatric Evaluation and Management Program	17
	Short Stay Program	18

Respite Care Program	18
Palliative Care Program	18
Nursing Home Care	18
XII. MENTAL HEALTH CARE	18
XIII. GENERAL INFORMATION.....	20
Advance Care Planning: Advance Directives	20
Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)	21
Organ Donation	21
Ethics Advisory Committee	22
Confidentiality/Medical Records (HIPAA)	22
Informed Consent	23
Pain Management	23
Patient and Family Education	24
Health Information on the Internet	24
Patient Health Information Library	25
Patient Advocate/ Representative	25
Patient Rights	26
Patient Responsibilities	27
Speak up. Be a Partner in your Healthcare (JCAHO)	27
XIII. SERVICES.....	29
Ambulatory Surgery	29
Audiology & Speech Pathology Service	29
Canteen Service	29
Chaplain Service	30

Dental Service	30
Laboratory Service	30
Neurology Service	30
Nuclear Medicine Service	31
Nutrition and Food Service	31
Optometry Service	31
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service	31
Prosthetics and Sensory Aids	31
Radiology Service	32 Recreation
Therapy Service	32
Smoking Cessation Clinic	32
Social Work Service	33
Social Protective Services	33
Surgical Specialty Services	33
Visual Impairment Services	34
Voluntary Services	34
XIV. VA REGULATIONS.....	35
Parking Regulations	35
No Smoking Policy	35
Safety	36
XV. TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION.....	36
Map of Buildings and Parking lots	38

A MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL CENTER DIRECTOR

Welcome, and thank you for choosing VA healthcare. For over seventy-five years, the Northport VA Medical Center has been providing Long Island's veterans with quality healthcare.

Throughout the years, our highly trained staff of caring professionals has delivered medical, surgical, psychological, and social services that have helped countless numbers of former service men and women live healthier lives. As you get to know us better, you'll see what I mean. We provide this handbook as a resource for you and your family, to help you know what to expect of VA Healthcare:

- *Our aim is to promote your health and prevent illness, keeping you out of hospital if possible,*
- *We will focus on your discharge from the day that you are admitted and get you home just as soon as you are well enough to leave,*
- *We want to assist you with health care planning, such as identifying Advance Directives, so that your treatment choices are honored,*
- *We will work with you as a partner in your care, and with your family or caregiver,*
- *We want you to be aware of your entitlements, and your rights and responsibilities.*

Please let us know what we can do to help you manage your healthcare. It is our privilege to serve you.

Sincerely yours,

Robert S. Schuster, MHCA, Director

I. INTRODUCTION

Our mission is to improve your health by providing primary care, specialty care, mental health services, extended care, and related social support services in an integrated healthcare delivery system. We strive to demonstrate, by attitude and actions, the qualities of courtesy, friendliness, compassion and concern for you and your family. We will also respect your cultural, social, and spiritual values. When you review our Customer Service Standards, you will see how they reflect these goals.

In order for us to respond to your unique needs and expectations, we encourage you to be a partner – with your providers and team, in your healthcare plan. We believe that patients who understand and participate in their care achieve better results. If you have any questions about any aspects of your care, please contact your treatment team.

Customer Service Standards

1. We will treat you with courtesy and dignity.
2. We will provide you with timely access to healthcare.
3. One healthcare team will be in charge of your care.
4. We will involve you in decisions about your healthcare.
5. We will strive to meet your physical comfort needs.
6. We will provide support to meet your emotional needs.
7. We will take responsibility for coordinating your care.
8. We will try to provide information and education about your health care in ways that you will understand.
9. We will provide the opportunity to involve your family in your care when appropriate.
10. We will provide for a smooth transition between your inpatient and outpatient care.

Ambassadors (in green jackets) are stationed at the Information Desk in the lobby of the Primary/Specialty Care Pavilion to assist with directions and to provide information. Wheelchairs for use during clinic visits are available from the Ambassadors.

II. AMBULATORY CARE

PRIMARY CARE – BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP IN HEALTH CARE

Northport VA Medical Center's award-winning Primary Care Program provides accessible and comprehensive care that is coordinated by a team of healthcare professionals on whom you may rely for consistent, quality treatment.

Each of the Blue, Yellow and Red Primary Care teams consist of:

Medical Physicians	Social Workers	Pharmacists
Nurse Practitioners	Dietitians	Psychologists
Nurses	Clinic Managers and Clerks	

Outpatient Clinics in the Primary/Specialty Pavilion are open Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., except for Federal holidays. An evening Primary Care clinic is available on Wednesdays between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m.

How will I be able to contact my provider?

You will be assigned to one of the primary care teams with a contact person and phone number. There is no difference between the teams; they simply provide a way for you to see the same staff on each visit.

Red Team..... (631) 754-7978

Blue Team..... (631) 754-7948

Yellow Team..... (631) 754-7973

What should I do if I can't keep a scheduled appointment?

It is very important that you call your team and cancel appointments if you cannot keep them.

What if I need new prescriptions or medical care?

If you need new prescriptions or medical care between scheduled visits, you may call your Primary Care Manager for a prompt appointment. Should you run out of medications before your next scheduled appointment, **call the Primary Care Pharmacist at ext. 6068**. You will receive enough of the medication to last until your scheduled appointment. In order to continue to receive medications from the VA, you will have to see your provider as required.

COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS (CBOCs)

Primary Care is also available at three clinics in the community, from 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM:

Plainview Clinic 1425 Old Country Road, Building H, Plainview Monday through Friday

Westhampton Clinic Gabreski Air Force Base, 150 Old Riverhead Road, Westhampton Beach
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday
By appointment only; no walk-ins on an active military base.

Patchogue Clinic 4 Phyllis Drive, Patchogue. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

If you would prefer to receive Primary Care services at one of these sites, please discuss this with your Provider or clinic clerk.

SPECIALTY CARE

The Medical Center provides over twenty-five Specialty Clinics in the Pavilion and Building 200 on weekdays from 8:00 - 4:30 PM. Your Primary Care provider must refer you to these clinics. Pick up a Visitor Guide at the Pavilion Lobby desk, showing the days and times of each clinic.

DUAL CARE - HAVING A VA AND ALSO A NON-VA DOCTOR.

Our goal is to make sure you receive quality care that meets your needs and is appropriate and safe. Your VA provider is willing to work with you and your non-VA doctors to provide and coordinate your health care. If you seek treatment from both the VA and a non-VA doctor, your care is called "dual care".

Your VA provider is responsible for your care within the VA system. He or she will prescribe medications for you and order the tests needed to monitor the effects of your medications.

If I want Dual Care, what do I need to do?

1. You must be enrolled in the VA and assigned to a VA Primary Care provider or specialist who is responsible for your general health care.
2. You must tell both your non-VA doctor and your VA provider that you want your care coordinated.
3. You must ensure that the VA has access to your outside health records. You will need to complete a "Release of Information" form with your non-VA doctor, who should forward your records to the VA.
4. You should provide the VA with the name, address and phone number of all your non-VA doctors. This information will be placed in your health record. You should also give your non-VA doctor the name, phone number, and address of your VA provider. A business card would be ideal.
5. You should make sure that your VA provider knows about every visit with your non-VA doctor or specialist.
6. You must continue to pay all charges for care provided by your non-VA doctor and also pay the VA co-pays.
7. Some medications involve higher risks and can only be used safely with close monitoring. Examples include warfarin, lithium, anti-arrhythmic agents, chemotherapy and new thyroid medications. The VA will only dispense these medications if you take the necessary monitoring tests.
8. These monitoring tests must be done at the VA except under unusual circumstances. If they must be done somewhere else, the VA will need written results from you so that we can be assured that the medications are being used safely.

What is the role of my VA provider in "dual care"?

Your VA provider will review the health records that you provide from your non-VA doctor.

VA providers will see you regularly as needed, to provide safe care. If your VA provider agrees with your non-VA doctor's assessment and treatment plan, your VA provider will order your medications, so long as they are on the VA drug formulary. If you prefer to use a non-formulary

drug but your VA provider believes that a formulary drug is just as good, you will have to have your prescription filled outside the VA at your own expense.

Your VA provider may advise changes in your treatment plan.

Your VA provider will not order any medication that may be unsafe for you. This could occur if you are not taking the monitoring tests or not keeping your appointments.

Your VA provider will ask you to provide updates on any care you receive from your non-VA doctor, as well as any vitamins and herbals that you take.

Your VA provider may refer you to a VA specialist for evaluation.

WOMEN'S PRIMARY CARE

The Women Veterans Health and Wellness Center includes the Women's Health Resource Room, Building 200, on the 4th Floor. It provides the following women's health care services:

Primary Care Mammography Gynecology Women's Support Groups

Counseling for Sexual Trauma Experiences, Domestic Violence and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

The Women Veterans Health Program focuses on health promotion and total wellness provided through screening, education, preventive and comprehensive care, and referral to counseling services. Care is provided in a nurturing environment that maintains dignity, privacy, and confidentiality. For more information, please contact the Women Veterans Coordinator at (631) 544-5314.

Women Veteran's Advocate: Members of the Women Veterans Advisory Committee volunteer to act as special advocates for women patients. Ask a staff member to contact this advocate for you at ext.5314.

HOPTEL

The HOPTEL provides temporary lodging at the Medical Center on a short-term basis for veteran patients who are receiving time-limited outpatient medical care and who have a travel hardship. The stay is usually limited to a few nights, except for patients who are having some types of long-term outpatient medical care (e.g. radiation therapy). No medical, nursing, or other clinical staff are on-site in the HOPTEL to handle medical issues that arise; therefore, HOPTEL guests must be independent in their care, or bring their caregiver. Temporary lodging in HOPTEL is also available to family members of veteran inpatients who are traveling a great distance to the Medical Center and are from out of town, as well as families of terminally or critically ill inpatients. The Medical Center provides meals at no cost in the Veterans Dining Room for veterans and families/caregivers staying in HOPTEL. For more information, contact your unit or program Social Worker or call extension 7029.

III. PHARMACY SERVICES

Only prescriptions written by a VA provider can be filled at the VA Pharmacy. Your provider will enter most prescriptions into the computer, but if you are picking up a new prescription, you must speak with a Pharmacist or the processing of your prescription will be delayed. The Pharmacist will review and process your prescription(s) and counsel you on the medications. Please wait while your new prescription(s) are filled. You can pick them up at the dispensing window when your name appears on the television monitors located in the Pharmacy waiting area and in Café 200.

REFILL prescriptions are sent by mail and filled by our Consolidated Mail Out Pharmacy (CMOP) based in Massachusetts. Refills may be requested via our automated telephone system or by mail:

- Call 1-800-799-3023. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Outside of New York State, call (631) 754-4989. Allow up to 10 days for delivery by mail.
- Mail the refill slip to: Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, PO Box 9000, Northport, NY 11768-9000.
- Drop off your refill slip in the drop box on the wall outside of the Pharmacy Waiting area. It will be forwarded to the CMOP.

Please request your refills at least 10-14 days before you will run out of the medication.

The Outpatient Pharmacy is open from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you have any questions about your medications, call your Primary Care Pharmacist (See inserted phone number list) or the Pavilion Pharmacy at (631) 266-6068. There is always a pharmacist available to answer questions. **Please do not call these numbers to order refills.**

MEDICATION DO'S AND DON'TS

DO ask your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional about your prescription. Make sure you know the name of the medication, why it is being prescribed, and how and when it should it be taken. Ask about potential side effects and what you should do if you experience any sort of reaction. Ask if he/she can provide you with any written information about medications.

DO make sure to provide your doctor or health care professional with a thorough medical history. Tell them about all of the medications (prescription and over-the-counter) you are now taking and have recently taken.

DO keep phone numbers for your doctor(s) and pharmacist handy, along with the numbers of your local EMS and poison control centers. Check your area for pharmacies that are open 24 hours a day in case of an emergency.

DO be sure to take your medicine as it is prescribed and for the full length of time as directed by your doctor. **DON'T** stop taking your medication as soon as you think you feel better without first checking with your doctor.

DO talk to your doctor and pharmacist about the dosage of your medicine. Medications are sometimes given in different strengths or with different frequency. How certain drugs affect your body changes with age, so ask your doctor if it may be appropriate to reconsider dosages of drugs you've been taking for a long time.

DO contact your doctor or pharmacist immediately if you experience any unexplained side effects. **DON'T** take the next dose until you have consulted with one of these health care professionals.

DO store medications in their original containers from the pharmacy. Basic information about your medication is on the original container. Someone may accidentally take medicines that are not clearly identified. This can be dangerous.

DO keep all prescription medicines in a locked cabinet or in a spot well out of the reach of young children. Ask for child resistant safety closures and make sure that the caps of bottles are closed tightly. Teach your child that medications can be dangerous if misused.

DO ask your pharmacist how long the medication remains effective. **DON'T** take it after its expiration date.

DON'T begin taking a new prescription or over-the-counter remedy without first asking your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional if it will interact with your other medications.

DON'T ever take another person's prescription or share your prescription medicines with anyone, even though they appear to have the same problem as you.

DON'T store capsules or tablets in the bathroom, near the kitchen sink, or in other damp places. Heat or moisture may cause the medicine to break down. Also, **DON'T** leave the cotton plug in a medicine container that has been opened, since it may draw moisture into the container.

DON'T store medicines in the refrigerator unless directed to do so. Keep liquid medicines from freezing. Also, store medicines away from heat and direct light.

DON'T take medicine in the dark, for example, when you wake up at night. You may think you know exactly what the bottle on your bedside table contains. Turn on your light to make sure.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

Enrollment in VA health care is determined annually. Most honorably discharged veterans are eligible for treatment. There may be a co-payment required based on income. For further information, please call the Health Benefits Advisor at ext. 2659 or Coordination of Benefits office, ext. 2661 or 5589.

CHAMP VA for Veteran's dependents

In 1973, the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) was established as a health benefits program for dependents of permanently and totally disabled veterans, survivors of veterans who died from service-connected conditions, or who at the time of death were rated permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected condition. Under CHAMPVA, VA shares the cost of covered medical services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries worldwide. Dependents must be 18 years and over and under 65 years of age in order to receive care at the VA. Once a dependent becomes eligible for Medicare, they are not eligible for medical care at a VA Medical Center. All services must be preauthorized by CHAMPVA prior to receiving care except for emergency treatment.

For information, call CHAMPVA toll free at 1-800-733-8387 or contact the Tricare Sharing Benefits Advisor at extension 2661.

TRICARE

Individuals are eligible for TRICARE if they are registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). The DEERS record will indicate the dates of eligibility. All uniformed service sponsors (active duty or retired) should ensure that their family status (marriage, divorce, new child, etc.) and residential address are current in DEERS. DEERS enrolment is completed in uniformed services personnel offices, not TRICARE service centers. For more information about DEERS, contact the Defense Manpower Data Center Support Office (DSO) Telephone Center from Monday through Friday, toll free at 1-888-999-5195. Or contact the VA Tricare Sharing Benefits Advisor at extension 2661.

V. VETERANS BENEFITS

Benefits Counselor/New York State Regional Office

Veterans' Benefits Counselors are available to answer questions about your VA benefits.
245 W. Houston, Street
New York, NY 10014 1-800-827-1000

New York State Division of Veteran's Affairs

(631) 266 - 6702 Fax (631) 266-6703
Monday- Friday
Building 9, first floor, Room 120

Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency

(631) 853-8387 or (631) 853-VETS
100 Veterans Memorial Highway
Dennison Bldg. 3rd Floor
Hauppauge, New York 11788-0099

Nassau County Veterans Service Agency

(516) 572-8452 Information line
1425 Old Country Road, Bldg H
Plainview, New York 11803-5015

Disabled American Veterans/Northport VA Medical Center

Ext. 7260 Wednesdays 9:00 AM-2:00 PM; other days by appt only.
Building 9, first floor, Room 109

Long Island Chapter American Ex-POW's/Northport VA Medical Center

Ext. 7191 Tuesdays 9:00 AM-11:00 AM. Bldg 9, Room 107

VI. BILLING – MEDICAL CARE COST RECOVERY (MCCR)

Public Law 99-272 allows the VA to collect co-payments for medical care provided to certain veterans based on income and eligibility. In addition, this law authorized the VA to bill insurance carriers for the cost of medical care to non-service connected and service connected veterans for their non-service connected conditions. This law also allowed the VA to bill non-service medical care for service connected veterans 0% and non-service connected veterans (depending on income) a co-payment of \$15 for routine/primary care and \$50 for specialty care. Inpatients are charged the Medicare deductible for the first 90 days of care and 50% of the Medicare deduction for each subsequent 90 day period of care. In addition, a \$10 per day for inpatient care will be charged. Veterans referred for extended care services will also be assessed to determine if the veteran is subject to the Long Term Care Co-payment. Veterans in Priority Group 2 through 7 also must pay a \$7 co-payment for each 30 day or less supply of medication for non-service connected veterans and service connected veterans (less than 50%) when prescribed for treatment of non-service connected conditions.

See also the most current Billing Guidelines, Long Term Care co-payment regulations and other handouts in the clinic areas.

The Medical Care Cost Recovery (MCCR) staff will assist you with information about health insurance and billing by the VA. In order to serve your needs and assure that billing is appropriate and correct, please update your insurance, home address, telephone number, employment status, and financial information as changes occur.

Billing Inquiries

In-Person: Building 10, Room 106 Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Phone: (631) 266- 6045 or 1 - 888 - 440 - 9587

Coordination Of Benefits, Insurance Updates and Pre-Certification

In-Person: Building 200, First Floor, Admissions Area

Phone ext. 5589 or 5520 from Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

VII. EMERGENCY CARE

If you cannot wait for your next clinic appointment because of a serious health condition, the Emergency Room (Building 200) is open 24 hours everyday. However we encourage you to contact your Primary Care team before going to the ER. You might be able to be seen by your provider or another member of your team that same day or the next day. Please do not go to the ER for new prescriptions or refills.

If you have the warning signs of heart attack or stroke or other potentially serious symptoms, **call 911 and tell the ambulance driver to take you to the hospital nearest to where you are.** Driving yourself to the hospital or driving farther to the VA can delay care! It's too dangerous for you and other drivers.

Heart Attack Warning Signs

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain anywhere in the chest lasting more than a few minutes
- Pain spreading to the shoulder, neck, both arms, stomach or back.
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or vomiting, or shortness of breath
- Chest discomfort with a feeling of doom or threat of death

Along with symptoms common to men, women may have other symptoms such as:

- Shortness of breath without chest pain
- Pain in lower part of chest
- Fatigue

Stroke Warning Signs (Not all of these signs occur in every attack)

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or understanding

Don't delay. Call 911 if you have early signs of a heart attack, stroke, poisoning or other life threatening illness.

For general health information, call the VISN 3 Nurse Help Line 1 - 800 - 877 - 6976

VIII. INPATIENT CARE

What to Bring to the Hospital

- Pajamas, bathrobe, non-skid slippers, toothbrush and toothpaste, an electric razor, and a list of the medications that you are currently taking.

Do Not Bring:

- Firearms, weapons, ammunition, expensive jewelry, alcoholic beverages, medications or drugs of any sort. Failure to adhere to this regulation may result in your being discharged.
- Portable television, radios, hair dryers and other electrical appliances.
- Any more than \$200.00 in cash. See Patient Funds, under Services, below.

The Medical Center cannot be held responsible for personal belongings.

For your safety in the hospital....

We strongly encourage you to stay on your unit. Leaving the unit could result in missed or delayed visits by your care team, medications, tests, treatments or meals. You should not leave the unit if you have an IV with chemotherapy or blood, have just had a treatment, feel weak or dizzy, etc. For your safety and to assure that you receive the very best care, please inform the staff if you must leave the unit.

No Smoking!

For the safety of others as well as your own, do not smoke in your room or in your bathroom - or anywhere on the unit or inside the hospital buildings. **You must go outside to smoke.** For patients in acute care, non-compliance with the No-Smoking policy may result in discharge.

This may be a good time to quit smoking. Call x 2258 and ask about our **Smoking Cessation Clinic**. Receive free medications that can help you quit. There is no need to register; just walk in. Every Wednesday afternoon at 1:00 PM in the Patient Education classroom, Pavilion area 1-D.

What to do in the case of fire

In case of fire, please follow the directions given by the staff. They will assist you in every possible way. Emergency fire exits and fire extinguishers are located throughout the Medical Center. Please review the "Safety Regulations" section of this Patient Handbook for more important safety information.

Please don't fall!

Your risk of falling is increased when you are sick and feeling weak or dizzy, in an unfamiliar place, on medications and surrounded by medical equipment. Tips to prevent falling include:

- Rise slowly from lying down or sitting. Sit for a minute on the side of your bed before standing.
- Call for help when you need something that is out of arm's reach, or need to get up and/or go to the bathroom. Go to the bathroom before you go to bed.
- Watch out for furniture and equipment in your way. Avoid leaning on furniture that might move.
- Wearing your shoes and socks rather than slippers when out of bed is recommended in order to prevent skids and injury to your feet. Use your cane or walker.

When someone asks you to sign a consent for treatment...

You have the right to be informed about, and to accept or refuse, any medical treatment or procedure. Be sure that you understand what the consent says. Do not hesitate to ask questions until you feel comfortable about what you are signing. If you do not understand it, ask someone to explain it to you. Do not assume that 'the staff know what is best for you'. Make sure that you know what you are agreeing to!

Tell your doctor who your Health Proxy is, in the event that you cannot make a decision for yourself. Make sure that this person understands your wishes.

Do not take your own medications when in the hospital!

It could be dangerous to take medications that you have brought from home along with medications that are ordered for you when you are in the hospital. If you did bring medications to hospital, send them home with a visitor or give them to a nurse.

After all options are tried ... Restraints are a last resort

Illness can sometimes cause patients to become confused. Caring for someone who is confused or striking out can be difficult at times. This is especially true during hospitalization. Confused patients can fall and injure themselves, wander and get lost, or remove safety devices, tubes and IV lines. They sometimes hit or kick, injuring other patients, staff, family members and/or themselves.

Years ago nurses and doctors often placed confused patients in restraints to assure their safety. Over the years it was found that restraints themselves could cause some injuries. Now, all over the country, the standard is to limit the use of restraints.

What are restraints?

Restraints are devices used to restrict freedom of movement to prevent injury to patients or others. The most common types of restraints are:

- soft wrist restraints
- fabric vests
- a Geri-chair with a table top
- the bed with all side rails raised

Wrist and ankle restraints are used on rare occasions to control violent behavior and prevent injury. In Psychiatry, in the rare event that a patient loses control, a safe seclusion room may be used for a short period of time to protect him/her and others.

Who decides on the use of restraints?

A nurse or a doctor can make the decision to restrain a patient. Then a doctor sees the patient and writes an order for the patient to be restrained for only as long as needed.

As much as we try to be restraint-free at Northport VAMC, this is not always possible. At times, after weighing all the risks, restraints are necessary. Restraints are used only as a last resort, after all other options have been tried.

AVAILABLE SERVICES IN THE HOSPITAL

Barber Shop Lower level of Building 7 Shaves and haircuts are available for a nominal fee.
Inpatients – Arrangements should be made through the Unit Secretary.

Mail

Your family and friends may send flowers and mail to the following address:

Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Unit #

79 Middleville Road

Northport, New York 11768-2290

DO NOT HAVE CASH SENT THROUGH THE MAIL

Telephone Service

Bedside telephones are available on most units. Calls must be charged to a third party or an MCI account. You may use a calling card. Pay telephones are located on each floor of Building 200.

Television

Television service in your room in Building 200 and Day Rooms is provided at no cost to you.

Visitors

Visiting hours are from 12 Noon to 8:00 p.m. Two (2) persons may visit a patient at once.

Children under 12 are not permitted on the unit. Small children may wait in the Pavilion Lobby or the ER waiting area, provided an adult attends them.

Intensive Care Unit: 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for 15 minutes on the hour.

Special arrangements will be made to accommodate visitors who cannot come within these hours.

Nutrition and Food Services

The diet prescribed by your physician is an important part of your medical care. The unit dietitian will counsel you about your diet during your hospital stay and at discharge.

It is important that you be on your unit at mealtime.

Any snacks from visitors or other sources should be labeled with your name and the date when placed in unit refrigerators, and will be discarded after 48 hours. Ask your dietitian for snacks that are appropriate for your diet.

The Patient Advocate and Patient Representative are available to help you and your family with problems that may occur during your hospital stay. If you are unable to resolve the problem with the staff and supervisor in the area, call ext. 5026 or 7009.

Patient's Funds – Lower Level of Building 200

The 'Personal Funds of Patient' program is administered on an individual patient basis within guidelines set by mandatory regulations and consistent with the your personal needs, condition, and treatment plan. You, or a family member on your behalf, may deposit funds for safekeeping in non-interest bearing accounts at the VAMC. Personal checks take two (2) weeks to clear.

Bank checks and money orders are cleared immediately. Contact the Unit Secretary for further assistance.

Financial concerns

If you have financial concerns related to your admission or aftercare, contact a Coordination of Benefits advisor at ext. 2661 or 5589.

For **an interpreter**, contact Human Resources on weekdays, ext. 2734. On holidays, evenings, nights or weekend, call the Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD), ext. 2655.

DISCHARGE PLANNING

One of the major concerns of patients is *“what will happen when I am ready to leave the hospital?”* We understand your concern and would like to help you achieve your highest level of recovery. We encourage you and your family to ask questions about your condition, treatment, and needs upon discharge, as partners in your continuing care.

Why is it important to plan for your discharge?

We know that patients recover faster when they know what will happen to them from the time of admission through discharge and return to home. You and your family will feel reassured knowing how your needs will be met as you move from one level of care to another.

It is never too early to begin thinking about your discharge from the hospital. Plans can be modified if your situation changes. Advance planning provides you with a chance to think about and adjust to changes that may become necessary following an illness. Starting early enables you to make informed decisions and involve those who are closest to you.

Who will help you?

Your discharge planning will be provided by an interdisciplinary group of professionals, consisting of your social worker, doctor, nursing staff, dietitian, pharmacist, and other health care staff. Team members work closely together to address your total care needs.

As the coordinator of your discharge plan, your **social worker** will assist you with any social, emotional, family and financial problems related to your illness, and will refer you and your family to community agencies, if needed. Your social worker is professionally trained and knowledgeable about community services and alternative living situations in the community. He or she can assist you to obtain these services and also address any financial concerns.

Your **doctor** will discuss your illness and treatment plan with you and your family and determine a time frame for discharge. Your doctor will:

- decide whether you will need to return to the outpatient clinic for follow-up after discharge
- write the order for your discharge from the hospital
- explain what you need to do to care for yourself after you leave the hospital
- give you phone numbers to call if you have questions after you get home
- write prescriptions and send them to the pharmacy.

Your **nurse** will teach you to do as much self-care as you are able to do at home. If you need nursing care after you leave the hospital, the Community Health Nurse Coordinator will:

- discuss home care services with a home nursing agency.
- review the plan for your care after discharge from the hospital, including your medications and treatments
- give you written information about your discharge plan

Your **dietitian** will teach you about any special diet to be followed after discharge. You can also be referred to groups, classes or Nutrition Clinic for follow-up as an outpatient.

Your **pharmacist** will talk to you about your medication, how and when to take it, what to do if side effects occur, and what foods, drinks or other medications to avoid.

Going Home

The Treatment Team decides when you may go home. Prior to your discharge, be sure that you understand all aspects of your illness, including self-care, medications, diet, and exercise. Ask questions about any other health care concern and write down the date and time of any follow-up appointment.

Please do not leave without your medicines and having discussed them with your nurse or the pharmacist. You (or a family member) will need to pick up medicines or supplies at the Outpatient Pharmacy in the Pavilion area 1-C near the main hallway into Building 200.

If you have questions after you get home, call this toll-free number 24 hours a day:

VISN 3 NURSE HELPLINE 1 - 800 - 877 - 6976

DISCHARGE AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE

If you choose to leave the Medical Center against your doctor's advice before your treatment is completed, you must request to leave, preferably in writing. You will be advised of the risks associated with leaving and asked to sign a release. However, your doctor will document in your medical record that, based upon his or her knowledge of your situation, you are not endangering yourself or others. Your doctor will review your situation and take appropriate action.

IX. CONTINUING CARE

Continuity of care is provided through a variety of coordinated services – offered at the Medical Center or in the community – which eligible veterans can access in different ways depending upon the type of treatment and/or services they need. The Medical Center is committed to providing a customized treatment plan for all veterans - at the VA, through contracted health care services, or by referral to community providers at the veteran's expense.

Options for post-hospital and continuing care

Veterans often require some on-going care when they leave the hospital. Your needs upon leaving the hospital will depend on the severity and type of illness for which you were hospitalized and who is available and able to care for you. Available services include:

- **Home Health Services** include community and private programs that provide medical, nursing and follow-up care in the home. Home care is available to veterans who are home bound with chronic diseases and/or who need assistance with daily activities such as bathing,

dressings, feeding, walking etc., or need the services of a “visiting nurse” or physical or occupational therapist. The VA or Medicare/Medicaid or other third party insurance may pay for these services depending upon the coverage and criteria for either skilled or non-skilled home care.

- ***Home Delivered Meals*** can be provided by a social service agency or community group if you cannot cook for yourself.
- ***Hospital Based Primary Care (HBPC)*** is a VA program providing medical and related health care supervision to support patients in their homes (including patients with chronic conditions or terminal illness). To be eligible for this program, you must have a caregiver, be essentially homebound and live within 45 minutes of the VAMC. Participants are also eligible for respite services at the VA Medical Center.
- ***Respite Care*** provides supportive care to veterans on a short-term basis to give your caregiver a planned period of relief from the physical and emotional demands associated with providing care. It may help you to continue to live at home. You may receive respite care for 30 days in two-week blocks, in a given calendar year. Non Service-Connected veterans and non-compensable zero percent Service-Connected veterans may be subject to a co-payments.
- ***Support Groups*** at Northport VAMC offer a wide range of assistance for veterans and their families. Support groups may also be found in the community. Your social worker can assist you with referrals.
- ***Comprehensive Day Treatment Services*** provide intensive and supportive psychological treatment services five days a week to outpatients who have emotional and psychiatric problems. Services primarily involve group treatment and socialization in a therapeutic community atmosphere. However, individual and marital treatment is also available. The individual veteran’s needs determine the frequency of visits and the specific services.
- ***Adult Day Care Programs*** are community-based and provide a range of supervised activities including social, recreational and physical programs for the elderly. These services are especially useful for families unable to provide care or supervision during the day, or for those who live alone. Service-connected veterans are given priority status for acceptance into Adult Day Health Care. VA will pay for up to six months of care for non-service connected veterans. For service-connected veterans, the contract may be indefinite. Non service-connected veterans and non-compensable zero percent service-connected veterans may be subject to co-payments when the placement is paid by the VA contract.
- ***Hospice/Palliative Care*** is a concept of care for the terminally ill. This care at the end of life emphasizes patient comfort, offers relief from pain, emotional and spiritual support, and also education about the dying process, bereavement counseling and respite care to the family. Hospice/palliative care services can be offered in the patient’s home by community agencies or at the Medical Center for those patients who meet criteria for this program.
- ***Mental Health Care*** provides a range of services and programs to assist veterans and their families with specialized assistance to cope effectively with emotional and psychological

problems. These programs include Outpatient Mental Hygiene Clinic, PTSD Recovery Center, Substance Abuse Treatment Services, Comprehensive Day Treatment Program, Community Case Management, Health Psychology, Sexual Trauma Services and the L.I. Vets Center.

Residential care

If you are unable to return to your home due to physical limitations or psychiatric disability and you have no available social supports, placement in a community home may be appropriate for you. Veterans use their own funds to pay for these placements. Veterans with insufficient funds will usually be eligible for Social Security.

- *Community Residences* are privately operated, but are inspected and approved by the medical center for placement of veterans. The medical center refers veterans to over thirty community residences. Veterans should be able to care for themselves, but require supervision and medication monitoring. The VA monitors veteran's care in these residences.

Nursing Home care

If you need more intensive care than can be provided at home or by family members, you may require care in a nursing home where physicians, nurses, social workers, physical therapists and other professionals provide specialized care. Your stay may be long or short term, depending upon your needs. Nursing home placements include:

- ***VA Nursing Home Units:*** Service-connected veterans are given priority status for these placements. VA facilities in the New York area include the Bronx, St. Albans and Northport. (*See also Extended care, p. 18e*)
- ***VA Contract Nursing Homes:*** The VA may pay for up to 31 days of care for non-service connected veterans. For service-connected veterans, the contract may be indefinite. You will need to apply for Medicaid to cover the cost of care following expiration of the contract. To allow sufficient time for their processing, Medicaid applications need to be initiated before you are accepted into the home. Non service-connected veterans and non-compensable zero percent service-connected veterans may be subject to co-payments when the placement is paid by the VA contract.
- ***Medicare/Medicaid or Private Payment Nursing Home Care:*** The nursing home costs are paid through either of these means depending on your situation.
- ***State Veteran's Homes:*** In our immediate NY downstate area, State homes are located in Stony Brook, and on the VA campuses at St. Albans, Queens and Montrose, NY. State Nursing Homes are certified to accept Medicare and Medicaid for payment.

Services for homeless Veterans

The VA Homeless Services Program provides an integrated continuum of housing and psychosocial services to eligible veterans who are homeless, or at risk for homelessness. Services include comprehensive assessment, client-centered treatment planning, ongoing case management, and referral to a wide variety of VA and community-based programs. Help is available in finding emergency, transitional and permanent housing, applying for VA and non-VA benefits, obtaining employment, and accessing VA healthcare. The following specialized programs and services are available within the Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) continuum of care:

- ***Contract Emergency and Transitional Housing*** at The Salvation Army Northport Veterans Residence located in Bldg. 11 on the Northport VAMC campus.
- ***Referral to the Community Based Residential Recovery Program***, a 122 - bed transitional housing program in the community offering group housing to homeless veterans completing medical center substance abuse treatment programs.
- ***Participation in the PRIDE Project***, a specialized program for veterans in VA outpatient treatment for substance abuse issues in receipt of public assistance in Suffolk and Nassau Counties and involved in the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program.
- ***Attendance at The Legal Assistance Workshop***, a monthly program offering education regarding legal issues and legal resources for low-income veterans in our immediate area.
- ***Referral to other VISN 3 Homeless Programs*** offering specialized care and services.

Your Social Worker will work with you and the hospital team to coordinate arrangements for your aftercare, whether returning home or transferring to another health care facility. Your Social Worker will advise you of the particular details of your discharge and discuss any concerns you and your family may have about your changing health care needs or style of living.

X. EXTENDED CARE

The Geriatric Evaluation And Management Program (Gem)

The GEM program utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to evaluate and treat problems of the elderly. Its goals are to improve the veteran's level of physical and psychological function and to find and treat previously undetected problems. The veteran must have the mental capacity to learn new skills. Emphasis is placed on meeting all the veteran's needs and discharging patients to home. The usual length of stay on the GEM unit is 4 weeks or less.

Short Stay Unit (SSU)

The Short Stay Unit program uses an interdisciplinary approach to the treatment of the elderly. Its goals are to improve the veteran's level of function, to complete initiated treatment, palliative care, and implementation of discharge plan. Emphasis is on discharging patients to home or a facility other than a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF). The usual length of stay on the Short Stay Unit is 60-90 days.

Respite Program

The Respite program provides chronically ill veterans with short-term stays in a nursing home unit in order to support and relieve their caregivers and help the veteran to continue to live at home. Contact the Nurse Manager, NHCU IV, ext. 7449 or your Primary Care team's Social Worker. (See also Continuing Care, p. 15)

Palliative Care Unit

The Palliative Care program provides terminally ill patients who have completed desired and definitive treatment, with a supporting, understanding, and sustaining setting. Its goal is to help patients to live free from pain and symptoms.

For the programs above, all patients must meet the eligibility criteria for long term care and will be assessed regarding LTC co-payment prior to evaluation for the program. (Please refer to the insert in this handbook.) An exception may be made for patients requiring Palliative Care.

Nursing Home Care

The purpose of the Nursing Home Care unit is to provide compassionate and expert care in order to restore and preserve the health of the Veteran. The interdisciplinary team will develop a treatment plan with the veteran and his/her family. This plan is flexible and will change with the patient's changing needs. Veterans must meet eligibility criteria (please refer to the Eligibility section) and demonstrate clinical need for this service.

XI. MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Northport VAMC provides a full continuum of mental health care that includes diverse inpatient, outpatient and community- based treatment programs. We recognize that each veteran's mental health needs are unique and his/her plan of care is specifically developed to address his/her personal care needs. These services include:

- Comprehensive Day Treatment Program/Center
- Health Psychology
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP)

- Mental Health Intensive Case Management
- Acute Inpatient Services
- Emergency Treatment
- Substance Abuse Treatment

Mental Health Clinics in the Medical Center and in the Community

A team of mental health professionals, including physicians, nurses, social workers, and psychologists provide medication management, supportive therapy, and individual therapy. Support groups are available for special issues, as well as family or couples therapy. If you think the Mental Health Clinic would be helpful to you, please speak with your physician. A walk-in clinic is also available for semi-emergent services. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please call extension 2207, 2208, and 2237.

Veterans who need treatment for the disease of addiction may contact the Access Care Center in Quad 1-D of the Clinical Pavilion, Bldg. 200. The Center is open Monday through Friday (excluding Federal holidays) from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Call the Center at extension 5780. We offer three treatment options within our Substance Abuse program - Partial Hospitalization (intensive outpatient addiction treatment), Aftercare (less-intensive outpatient addiction therapy), and outpatient detoxification. Call Psychiatry Service at extension 2785 for further information.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Recovery Center

This is a unique program in which eligible patients may participate in either an intensive residential PTSD program or the less-intensive outpatient program that allows veterans to participate in day or evening group or individual sessions. To arrange a screening appointment, call ext. 2774.

We also offer specialty services such as geriatric psychiatry, consultation and health psychology programs, neuropsychological assessment, family and marital therapy; help for Ex-Pow's, Persian Gulf and Vietnam Era veterans and treatment for victims of sexual abuse.

Comprehensive Day Treatment Program/Center

We provide support and psychotherapy for veterans coping with emotional or social problems. If you think that this program may help you, please speak with your doctor. Some groups are:

Anger Control	Coping with Depression	Psychotropic Medication Information
PTSD	Religion and Feelings	Therapeutic Recreation

(See also Continuing Care) For more information, please call ext. 2256.

Health Psychology

If you think you need any of the following services, speak with your provider.

- Stress Management
- Non-pharmaceutical Pain Management
- Smoking Cessation
- Diet Modification and Weight Control
- HIV counseling and support

For further information, call Psychology Service at ext. 2259

Mental Health Intensive Case Management for Veterans living in the Community

Intensive case management is for veterans with a serious mental illness who live in the community, have received 30 or more days of psychiatric hospital care during the previous year or have had three or more psychiatric hospitalizations, and would be helped by weekly follow up with a case manager. The goal of case management is to assist veterans in participating in the activities of daily living to help them recover from mental illness, live in the community and achieve the highest quality of life possible. Case managers help veterans to get needed psychiatric and medical care within the VA and the community. Please speak with your doctor.

Military Sexual Trauma

Veterans, both women and men, have experienced sexual trauma while they served on active military duty. While some of these veterans sought counseling and treatment for the aftereffects of the trauma, many have never discussed the incident or their medical or psychological condition with anyone.

VA provides eligible veterans with confidential counseling and treatment for the aftereffects of sexual trauma, helping them to better cope with the trauma experience, regain their confidence and self-esteem, and improve their quality of life. Call the Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator at ext. 5928.

Long Island Vet Center

The Long Island Vet Center at 116 West Main Street, Babylon, NY 11702, specializes in psychotherapy for war trauma. Eligibility is based on military service during specific periods of war or hostile actions and a clinical assessment that determines that such experiences remain unresolved for the veteran. The Vet Center also provides services to family members as needed. In addition the Vet Center offers psychotherapy for military sexual trauma that occurred while on active duty.

All veterans are eligible regardless of their period of military service. There is no means test. All services are provided free. The hours of operation are irregular in order to accommodate working veterans and family members. For more information, please call (631) 661-3930.

XII. GENERAL INFORMATION

ADVANCED CARE PLANNING:

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

Advance Directives are directions to caregivers that you should decide upon in advance of the time that you become sick or as soon as you are sick. Having written advance directives protects your right to accept or refuse medical treatment if you should become mentally or physically unable to communicate your choices due to illness or injury. Advance Directives are carried out **only** after you are declared to be medically **unable** to make informed healthcare decisions for yourself.

We encourage you to name someone over 18 years of age as your **Health Care Proxy** or give him or her **Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare** in advance of an illness or incapacity,

so that they can make health care decisions in your best interest. We also encourage you to prepare and sign a **Living Will** or **Treatment Preferences**, stating your personal choices for starting or stopping certain medical treatments, requesting a **Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order**, donating organs or using life-prolonging procedures and equipment. It is important for you to tell your loved ones and your doctor about your wishes. If you have named a Healthcare proxy or written a Living Will before admission to the VA Medical Center, please bring copies and discuss them with your VA doctor.

VA Advance Directives may be written after admission to the Medical Center. Your health care team will help you in writing Advance Directives and with any ethical concerns. Your VA Advance Directives will be placed in your medical record. You may revise or cancel them at any time, just by saying so.

If you do not have written Advance Directives and you become medically unable to make informed decisions, your health care team will inform and help your next-of-kin, legal guardian, or your Health Proxy to make health care decisions in your best interest. For more information, please contact your social worker, nurse, chaplain or doctor.

DO NOT RESUSCITATE (DNR)

You may decide that you do not want Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and/or other procedures to be done to restore your heart beat if your heart has stopped.

Any patient may request that a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order be written and placed in his/her medical record. You may speak with your doctor, nurse practitioner or other staff members about cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and its effects. You may request a DNR order even if you have not written Advance Directives. The order is reviewed regularly and may be cancelled at any time.

If you are medically unable to make a decision about a DNR order, your next-of-kin, legal guardian or adult over the age of 18, appointed by you to make decisions in your best interest, can request a DNR order for you.

If you are having a surgical procedure, your DNR order may be suspended during surgery and you might be given CPR. Please discuss this with your surgeon.

ORGAN DONATION

Our Medical Center participates in the New York Organ Donor Network Program. If you wish to "give the gift of life" and be a potential organ donor, speak with your provider. He or she will know if your medical condition allows you to be a suitable donor. Please contact your Primary Care Social Worker for more information.

Anatomical Donation for Medical Research

If you would like to direct that your remains be made available for medical research, contact:
The Department of Anatomical Science at Stony Brook University Hospital Medical School
8081 Health Sciences Center, Stony Brook, New York 11794 (631) 444 - 3111

ETHICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Northport VAMC's Ethics Advisory Committee offers consultation for ethical concerns and issues related to Patients' Rights. You, your family, other decision-makers and the staff can request an Ethics Consult.

An Ethics Consult leads to discussion and clarification of conflicts, disagreements, and questions in clinical decision-making. Thoughtful, reflective discussion often results in alternatives to be considered and steps to be taken for a satisfactory solution. The final decisions are always left with you, your family and your providers.

Examples of Ethical Issues:

- Decisions as to whether life-sustaining treatment such as dialysis, artificial ventilation (respirator), artificial feeding (feeding tube) should be started, continued, or stopped. And who should make these decisions if you could no longer speak for yourself?
- Decisions by your family or proxy when you are no longer able to make health care decisions and no one knows your wishes about end of life care.
- Conflict between what is written in the your Advance Directive (living will) and what your family may want.
- Disagreement between you (and/or your family members) and the medical team regarding your treatment plan.

Most difficult issues can be resolved through collaboration between you, your family, your medical team and members of the Ethics Committee.

Who are the Ethics Committee Members?

Ethics Committee members are clinical and non-clinical staff of diverse backgrounds who are chosen to provide an impartial, sympathetic ear to the problem at hand.

Look for posters listing the phone extensions of Ethics Committee Members or ask any staff member to contact them. On evenings, nights and weekends, contact the NOD, ext. 2664 or 7100

Patient Representative: 5326, 7009
Social Work: 7033

Medicine: 7907
Chaplain: 7204

Nursing: 2756

CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEDICAL RECORDS - HIPAA

HIPAA stands for the U.S. Government's Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. The intent of this act is to guarantee security and privacy of health information, reduce healthcare fraud and abuse, and enforce standards of electronic transmission of health information, for example health insurance and medical records. All health care activities, such as examinations, tests, treatments, procedures, consultations, and case presentations are confidential and will be conducted so as to preserve your privacy.

All records are kept in strict confidence. Your medical record both in the computer and your chart will be safeguarded and available only to those who need to know its contents in order to

provide your care. Information in your health record cannot be released to you or anyone else without your written approval. Forms to request copies of your record may be obtained through “Release of Information” in Room B1-7F in Building 200 or by calling ext. 2631.

INFORMED CONSENT

Your doctor, nurse practitioner or treatment team will explain your condition and any proposed treatments or procedures. Before any medical treatment or procedure is started, you will be told about the benefits and any known risks, potential problems related to recuperation, likelihood of success of the treatment or procedure, possible results of not having the treatment, and any significant alternatives to the treatment. You have the right to refuse any medical treatment or procedure. For specific treatments, procedures or surgery, you will be asked to sign a written consent.

You also have the right to refuse to participate in any research study. Your doctor would provide information and obtain your written consent or signature as described above. Refusing to participate in research will not affect your receiving the medical care that you need.

PAIN MANAGEMENT - AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR TREATMENT

As a patient, you can expect:

- Information about pain and pain relief measures.
- Caring staff who want to help prevent or relieve your pain, will believe you when you tell them about your pain and will respond quickly to your reports of pain.
- Treatments for pain based on the latest and best information.
- Care by pain relief specialists.

We expect you and your family to:

- Ask questions about your pain.
- Talk about choices for pain relief with your health care providers.
- Ask for pain relief when your pain first begins.
- Work with your health care team to make a plan for relieving your pain.
- Help your health care team to measure your pain level over time.
- Tell your health care team about any pain that will not go away.
- Follow the plan for managing your pain in the prescribed way.

PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION

It is your right to receive the health information that you need to understand your health problems and health care. We want you to be a partner with your providers and caregivers in staying well and when you are ill, participating in your treatment plan. It is important for you to understand your health care options and the consequences of your choices, and to be involved in decisions about your care. The Medical Center provides a wide variety of resources for learning - pamphlets, videos, classes and support groups, orientation class for new patients, Mini-Med School, annual Health Fair, health topics on cable TV, an American Diabetes Association-certified Diabetes Education Program, and the Patient Health Information Library (below). For information, contact the Patient Education Coordinator, ext 7773.

Health Information on the Internet

The primary VA website for patients and the public at large is **www.va.gov**

The VISN 3 web address is **www.va.gov/visns/visn03**. There is a link to the Northport VAMC web page or you can go directly to **www.va.gov.visns/visn03/nrptinfo.asp**

Be careful and critical when using the Internet to find health information. It can be difficult to decide whether that information is correct and current. To find reliable information:

- Have a trained librarian assist you in finding sites.
- Check the site's address (its URL) to learn which type of agency maintains the site. Those maintained by universities and government agencies tend to be the least biased: **.edu** is a university site; **.gov** is managed by a government agency; **.com** is the site of a commercial company; **.org** designates a not-for-profit organization or association.
- Print the information and take it to your next appointment to discuss with your doctor.

Many of the following sites have information on diseases, medications, treatments, procedures, nutrition and more.

Medline	www.medlineplus.gov
American Heart Association	www.americanheart.org
American Academy of Family Physicians	www.familydoctor.org
National Institute of Mental Health	www.nimh.nih.gov
American Cancer Society	www.cancer.org
Center for Disease Control	www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases
Federal Dept of Health and Human Services	www.healthfinder.gov
Mayo Clinic	www.mayoclinic.org

National Health Information Center	www.health.gov/NHIC/Pubs/tollfree.htm
New York Online Access to Health	www.noah-health.org
National Cancer Institute	www.nci.nih.gov
Alcoholics Anonymous	www.aa.org
Narcotics Anonymous	www.na.org
Overeaters Anonymous	www.oa.org/

PATIENT HEALTH INFORMATION LIBRARY

LOCATION: Medical Library, Building 12 HOURS: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.

(631) 261-4400, ext. 2973 or 2962

BOOKS and VIDEOTAPES: We have books and videotapes covering a wide variety of health topics. Veterans, family members, visitors and staff are welcome to browse and may take a book or tape home!

VIDEOS: A video program can be shown on TV in the privacy of your hospital room. Contact the library to request the program to be shown at the time most convenient for you!

MAILINGS: A special mailing service is provided for patients and family members. Information on specific topics of interest can be sent directly to your home.

LET US FIND IT FOR YOU! Any librarian can look for information on the computer and print it for you to take home or send it to your room.

PATIENT ADVOCATE / PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE

The Medical Center recognizes the basic rights of patients and families. In support of these rights, the facility maintains a patient advocacy program. Patient Advocates/Representatives are available to assist Veterans and their families with concerns, questions or complaints regarding services rendered by the Medical Center. We encourage you to resolve problems if possible with the staff and supervisor in the area where the problem occurs. In cases where additional support is needed, contact the Patient Advocates/Representatives, or ask any staff member to contact them for you.

The Patient Representatives/Advocates are available at extensions 5326 or 7009 from Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. During evenings, nights and weekends, all concerns should be directed to the supervisor of the immediate area. In the event that further assistance is needed and the concern cannot wait until the next business day, please contact the Administrative Officer of the Day (AOD) through the Admissions area, Building 200, ext 2655.

PATIENT'S RIGHTS

1. Patients will be treated as individuals, with dignity, compassion, respect, and reasonable protection from harm. Appropriate privacy will also be afforded.
2. Patients have the right to considerate, respectful care that recognizes personal, cultural, and spiritual values and beliefs and that focuses on unique health care needs.
3. Patients will receive to the extent they are eligible, prompt and appropriate treatment for physical or emotional disorders or disabilities, in the least restrictive environment necessary.
4. Patients will have supportive care, including appropriate management of pain, treatment for uncomfortable symptoms, and support for psychosocial and spiritual concerns and needs.
5. Patients have the right to be informed about, and participate in, decisions regarding their care. Patients have the right to consent to or refuse care that involves research, experimental treatment or educational projects. If you choose not to take part, you will receive the most effective care that the hospital can otherwise provide.
6. Patients have the right to refuse any medical treatment or procedure, including blood or blood products.
7. Patients have the right to an ethical consultation. Members of the Medical Center's Ethics Committee can be reached by calling Nursing at extension 2756 or 2664.
8. Patient's legal rights will be respected.
9. Patients have the right to communicate freely and privately with persons outside the facility and to have or refuse visitors.
10. Patients have a right to receive unopened mail. If there is reason to believe the mail may contain contraband, it will be opened in the presence of an official.
11. Patients have the right to Protective Services. Contact the Social Work Office at ext. 7029.
12. Patients have the right to keep and spend their own money.
13. Patients have the right to social interactions, regular exercise, and the opportunity for religious worship.
14. Medical records and all other information about patients are kept confidential, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law or by consent.
15. Patients have the right to indicate, in a timely manner, the preference regarding the withholding or withdrawing of life sustaining treatment. Patients have the right to be informed of the current legal status of the relevant Hospital Regulations and to request a "Do Not Resuscitate" order in accordance with such regulations.
16. Patients have the right to present problems, concerns or complaints relevant to their care or providers. Upon receipt of a patient's complaint, the organization will review the case, take appropriate action, and respond to the patient or his/her representative. In no way will the presentation of a problem, concern or complaint compromise a patient's present or future access to care at the Medical Center.
17. Patients have the right to formulate advance directives and appoint a surrogate to make healthcare decisions on their behalf to the extent permitted by law.
18. Patients have the right to communication assistance, if unable to speak or understand the English language with regard to their medical care.
19. Patients have the right to request information about organ donations. If you have additional questions, you may contact your physician or treatment team.

If you have any questions regarding these rights or wish to voice your concern about a possible violation of your rights, you may contact a patient representative at ext. 5326 or 7009.

PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a patient, you and your family members are responsible to:

1. Provide, to the best of your knowledge, accurate and complete information about your present complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, and other matters relating to your health. You are responsible to report any unexpected changes in your condition to the responsible clinical staff.
2. Ask your treatment team for more information if you do not understand what you are told about your care or what you are expected to do.
3. Follow the treatment plan developed with your treatment team and express any concerns you have about your ability to follow the proposed course of treatment. If questions or disagreement with the treatment plan occurs, you are responsible for discussing it with the treatment staff.
4. If you refuse treatment or fail to follow your team's instructions, you are responsible for the outcome.
5. Follow the Medical Center's rules and regulations concerning patient care, conduct, and safety.
6. Act with consideration and respect for other patients and hospital personnel by not making unnecessary noise, smoking, causing distractions or destroying the property of other persons and the hospital. Patients are responsible to inform visitors to do the same and to observe the visiting hours.
7. Prevent injury to yourself, other patients, visitors, and staff members and to be responsible for the safekeeping of clothing, money, and personal possessions you choose to keep in your possession.
8. Keep all scheduled diagnostic or treatment appointments on time.
9. Avoid interfering with the treatment of other patients, particularly in emergency situations.
10. Follow the Medical Center's **No Smoking Policy**.
11. Be understanding and patient during reasonable delays.
12. Make sure you understand medication instructions to be followed upon discharge from the Medical Center, and know whether an outpatient follow-up visit is scheduled.

SPEAK UP - BE SAFE, BE INFORMED, BE A PARTNER IN YOUR HEALTH CARE

Be An Active Partner in Your Healthcare!

Patients who take an active role in their healthcare have improved health outcomes.

Make sure you are getting the treatment that is prescribed for you.

- Don't be embarrassed about asking your doctor, nurse or other health professional if there is something that concerns you or doesn't make sense.
- If you are having surgery, ask the nurse for a marker. Mark the area of the surgery so there is no mix-up.
- If you think you are about to get the wrong medication, speak up! Let the nurse know.

- Let the nurse, doctor or therapist know right away if you think he or she has confused you with another patient.

Be involved in your care!

- All health care workers should introduce themselves to you when they enter your room or provide any kind of treatment. Each should be wearing a picture ID that is clearly visible.
- If you are about to receive a medicine or treatment, make sure the person giving it has checked your identity by asking your name or looking at your wristband.
- If you are hospitalized, make sure you're getting your medicine when you should. If not, ask.
- Has the person caring for you washed his or her hands? If you are unsure, ask. Hand washing is the single best way to stop the spread of infection!

Know your diagnosis.

- Make sure you know what your diagnosis is and understand what it means to your health.
- Ask if written material is available about your diagnosis.
- You can take notes about what you are told and use this to find additional information in the library or from a reliable website on the Internet.
- Read all medical forms before you sign them. It is important that you understand what is going to happen in a surgery or procedure. If you are unsure, ask the doctor or nurse.

Know your medications

- Know the names of all of your medications and what they are for.
- Carry a list of your medications and the dosages.
- Know the possible common side effects of your medications. If you are unsure, ask your provider or pharmacist.
- If you are hospitalized, ask about any pills that you don't recognize.
- If you have an IV, ask what it is for and how long it should run.

Be an active partner in your health care

- Know who is in charge of your care.
- Know what the treatment will involve. Ask about other options.
- Know why you are having tests and how you will get the results.
- Ask what you can do to best take care of your health.
- Bring a family member or friend as an advocate. Ask your advocate to take notes or ask questions if you don't feel up to it.
- Keep a personal health journal. A journal is a great place to keep your current medication list, test results, and other important information about your health care.
- If you have questions about your health care after you go home, call the **VISN 3 Nurse Help line at 1-800-877-6976.**

Source: Joint Commission On Accreditation Of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)

XIII. SERVICES

AMBULATORY SURGERY

Many surgical procedures can be done easily and safely in just one day. In the relaxed setting of the Ambulatory Surgery Unit (ASU), your family member can visit with you before and after your procedure. You will receive safe, expert care based on your own needs, without having to stay in the hospital overnight.

Well in advance of your procedure, you will visit the ASU Pre-Admission Testing Area. At that time, a Nurse Practitioner or a Physician Assistant will perform a complete history and physical exam. The Anesthesia and Nursing staff will also provide information and instructions regarding your procedure.

On the day of surgery, you will report to ASU, have your procedure done in the OR, spend a short recovery period in the Ambulatory Surgical Unit, and receive instructions on how to care for yourself at home after discharge. You **must** have someone drive you home after surgery.

AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH PATHOLOGY SERVICE

Audiology and Speech Pathology Service is located on the lower level of Building 200 in Room C0-2. We provide comprehensive care to eligible veterans with hearing and speech problems on both an inpatient and an outpatient basis. Please call ext. 7381

Audiological Evaluations	Hearing Aid Dispensary	Assistive Listening Devices
Speech Treatment/Evaluation	Swallow Treatment/Evaluations	Support Groups

CANTEEN SERVICE

Veterans' Canteen Service operates the Café 200 cafeteria, vending areas, and retail shops throughout the Medical Center:

Café 200 – Building 200 (Lower Level) Monday to Friday from 7:30 AM to 3:00 PM

- Inpatients may visit the Canteen only after receiving permission from the Nurse.
- Any food purchased at the cafeteria or from vending machines should be in line with your prescribed diet and with the knowledge of your doctor. Eating the wrong food can undermine your treatment.

Coffee Cart - Pavilion Lobby Monday to Friday from 7:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Vending areas - Building 200 - Lower Level, First Floor by ER entrance and Third Floor
Building 63 - Mental Health Clinic area, First Floor

Retail store - Building 89 Open to all. Offers electronics, designer clothes, gifts, etc.

- Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM
- Tuesday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Saturday 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM Closed Sunday.

CHAPLAIN SERVICE

Chaplains are available to minister to your spiritual, sacramental, and devotional needs. They visit medical units often and may be contacted through your unit secretary. Outpatients may call the Chaplain Service (631) 261-4400, Ext. 7194, between 8:00 am and 4:30 p.m. to speak with a chaplain. Religious services are held on Saturday (Jewish) and Sunday (Christian). Ask your unit secretary for the schedule.

DENTAL SERVICE

The Dental Service provides oral health care to eligible veteran outpatients, including oral examinations, assessment of oral health status, diagnosis and treatment of oral disease and maintenance of the function of oral structures. Consideration is also given to speech and appearance. The extent of both limited and comprehensive dental care that we can provide depends upon the patient's VA eligibility status. Please speak with your provider.

Emergency Dental Care: Emergency dental treatment for the relief of pain and control of acute dental infection will be authorized for all eligible veteran outpatients. Emergency dental treatment may be rendered to individuals not generally eligible for VA dental care, however non-eligible individuals may be billed by Medical Care Cost Recovery (MCCF) for this care.

Dental care for inpatients

The Dental Service provides such oral health care as is essential to the hospitalized veteran's medical needs in response to consultation requests from medical and mental health care providers. Oral health care for inpatients generally includes treatment of trauma, control of pain and elimination of acute infection.

Dental care for residents in Long Term Care units

Residents in the Nursing Home units are provided such dental treatment as is considered reasonably necessary to protect and maintain health. Consideration is given to speech, appearance, the resident's desire for dental care and the resident's ability to undergo care.

LABORATORY SERVICE

Laboratory services are available in the Clinical Lab area on the first floor of Building 200, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.

NEUROLOGY SERVICE

Neurology Service provides comprehensive care to veterans with neurological conditions on both an inpatient and outpatient basis. Patients suspected of having a neurological condition such as stroke, seizures, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis or disorders of the spinal cord are referred to the Neurology Service most often by their primary care physician.

NUCLEAR MEDICINE SERVICE

Nuclear Medicine, located on the lower level of Building 200, performs diagnostic tests for both inpatients and outpatients. The tests require tiny amounts of radioactive substances, which go to body organs or tissues for “imaging” with the use of gamma “cameras.” This information is valuable in making a diagnosis or planning therapy. For more information, please call ext. 7348 or (631) 266-6066.

NUTRITION AND FOOD SERVICE

Nutrition and Food Service provides nutrition counseling on a one-to-one basis to inpatients on their units and to outpatients in the Nutrition Clinic. Your primary care provider can refer you for this service.

Group patient education classes regarding diabetes management, weight control, and cardiac rehabilitation are also available. For information regarding class schedules, please call ext. 7712.

OPTOMETRY SERVICE

Optometry Service, located on the second floor of the Primary/Specialty Care Pavilion, provides:

- Comprehensive routine eye exams
- Diagnosis and treatment of eye disease
- Low vision rehabilitative services

Patients are generally entitled (based upon eligibility) to either one pair of bifocals or two pairs of glasses (reading and distance). Replacement glasses are handled on an individual basis.

For appointments, call (631) 266 - 6059.

PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION SERVICE (PM&RS)

The purpose of PM&RS is to evaluate your degree of injury or impairment and restore your functioning ability to the highest level to which you are capable. Many rehabilitative services are available to each patient, including Physiatry (the physiatrist is a Medical Doctor for the disabled), Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Kinesiotherapy, and Cardiac Rehabilitation. If you have questions regarding Physical Medicine Rehabilitation, please speak with your primary care provider regarding a referral for rehabilitation.

PROSTHETICS AND SENSORY AIDS SERVICE

Prosthetics is a broad term covering the field of prosthetics, orthotics, sensory aids, aids for the blind, medical equipment and medical supplies. At your doctor's request, Prosthetics Service supplies prostheses, sensory aids, wheelchairs, and medical equipment to veterans based upon their eligibility and medical need. For more information, please call the Prosthetics Service office at ext. 2286.

RADIOLOGY SERVICE

A full range of radiological services is available, including routine x-ray, GI studies, CAT Scanning, MRI, Ultrasound, and Interventional Special Procedures. Radiation Oncology consultation and treatment is also available. Mammography for VA patients is done at designated community sites.

RECREATION THERAPY SERVICE

Recreation Therapy provides therapeutic, leisure education, and self-directed recreational activities to veterans based on assessed leisure needs. Qualified recreation therapists, a music therapist, and an art therapist are available in Geriatrics and Extended Care, Acute Psychiatry, Home Based Primary Care (HBPC), Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation Program (CIIRP) and Comprehensive Day Treatment Program. Clinicians are also available via consult for inpatient and outpatient services. A comprehensive program is available seven days per week to enhance your leisure skills and improve your quality of life during hospitalization and after discharge. A monthly schedule of all Recreation Therapy and self-directed activities are available on your unit, in Building 88, and in the Recreation Therapy Service office located in Building 6, second floor.

Recreation and Leisure Facilities include:

Fitness Center	Golf Course	Tennis Courts	Pool
Art Studio	Music Studio	Gymnasium	Miniature Golf Course
Picnic Areas	Outdoor Senior Plaza		

The National Veterans Rehabilitation Programs are held annually. Find additional information about participating in our National Veterans program in the Health and Wellness Center located in Building 88 or call ext. 5582.

- National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival
- National Veterans Wheelchairs Games
- National Veterans Golden Age Games
- Very Special Arts
- Bowlers to Veterans Link Bowling Tournament

SMOKING CESSATION CLINIC

The Smoking Cessation Clinic meets every Wednesday afternoon at 1:00 PM in the Patient Education classroom in the Pavilion area 1-D. The clinic offers you the opportunity to work with others on behavioral strategies to help you quit, to have medication prescribed if needed and to attend weekly meetings with a support group. There is no need to register; just walk in. For more information, please call Psychology Service, ext. 2258

Veterans, family and friends are all encouraged to attend the Suffolk County 'Learn to be Tobacco Free' classes (free to all residents). One-hour classes are offered over 6-8 weeks at

convenient locations. Contact (631) 853 - 4017 or the web site - www.co.suffolk.ny.us/health for class schedules and sites, and to register.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

Social Workers are assigned to acute and long-term care inpatient units and programs, Primary Care and other outpatient clinics and community-based programs. They provide a variety of services to help you and your family deal with the emotional, social, and practical day-to-day difficulties often associated with illness or disability. They also provide assistance with family, money or housing problems, initiate referrals to needed community health and social service agencies, and plan for discharge and provide services to homeless veterans. Social Workers provide individual, family, and group counseling in support of specific veteran populations and are also available to help you access VA and non-VA entitlement programs and services. Please contact your unit, program, or clinic social worker or contact Ext. 7029 for further assistance.

SOCIAL PROTECTIVE SERVICES

If you or a family member is in need of protective services, contact your local Department of Social Services-Domestic Violence/Adult Protective/Elder Abuse Hotline. Calls are anonymous and confidential, 24-hour availability, 7 days a week. (Se Habla Espanol). In Suffolk County: 631-854-9100 and Nassau County: 516-571-4819 or 4823, and after 6pm 516-572-3143.

For situations of child abuse and neglect, call the NYS Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-342-3720. Other local agencies are the Nassau and Suffolk County Coalitions Against Domestic Violence: 631-666-8833 and 516-542-0404, as well as Suffolk County Adult Protective Services: 631-853-2236, after 4:30pm 631-854-9100, and Nassau County Adult Protective Services: 516-571-5819 or 4822.

It is a family offense to harass, menace, recklessly endanger and commit disorderly conduct against another family member. The Nassau County and Suffolk County protective services as well as other community agencies are there to assist you. There is help. You may also contact your inpatient or outpatient social worker or Social Work Service at ext. 7029.

SURGICAL SPECIALTY SERVICES

Surgical Specialty Services include:

ENT/Head and Neck
Gynecology

General Surgery
Ophthalmology

Surgical Oncology
Orthopedics

Outpatient clinics in the Primary/Specialty Pavilion are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, except Federal holidays.

Plastic Surgery
Thoracic Surgery

Podiatry
Urology

Proctology
Vascular

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT SERVICES

The Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST) Program assists veterans and their families to obtain health and rehabilitation services which can help greatly in adjusting to and coping with vision loss. Services include:

- Total health review, including eye and hearing examination and a review of veterans benefits and adaptive equipment
- Regional Blind Rehabilitation Center referral
- Guide dog school and state and local service agency referrals
- Support groups
- Vocational rehabilitation

For more information, please call the VIST Coordinator at ext. 2113.

VOLUNTARY SERVICES

The Veterans' Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) provides a highly effective volunteer program in cooperation with programs across the VAMC for the purpose of:

- Locating, recruiting, training and placing volunteers in assignments that are both beneficial to VA patients and rewarding to the volunteer.
- Assisting community organizations and individuals in participating in the VAVS Program.
- Assisting VA staff in developing assignments beneficial to patients and appealing to volunteers.

Voluntary Service provides and supports:

- Guest Services
- Authority to accept and distribute gifts and donations for the benefit of the Medical Center and Patients (with the exception of gifts for research and educational purposes)
- Volunteer Recruitment, Training and Placement
- Youth Volunteer Program
- Special Events
- National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program/Activities
- Community Relations/Marketing/Veterans Service Organizations
- Special programs/activities/events
- Comfort items for all patients
- Medical Center shuttle program
- DAV Transportation Network

The Voluntary Service office is located in Building 9, first floor. All questions regarding Volunteering/volunteers programs and opportunities/gifts and donations may be directed to:
Voluntary Service Officer, ext. 7183
Voluntary Service Specialist, ext. 7182

XIV. VA REGULATIONS

VA Police enforce all VA regulations to ensure a safe, secure, healthy environment at the Medical Center. Staff, patients and visitors who act with caring and courtesy promote a climate of cooperation. Patients and visitors cooperate by listening to and following all instructions and by not interfering with the treatment, comfort or safety of other patients.

Violation of VA regulations will lead to disciplinary action and/or prescribed penalties in keeping with the gravity of the offense and the physical and mental condition of the offender. These may include withholding of pass privileges, restriction to unit, disciplinary discharge, removal from the grounds, and prosecution in Federal Court.

- Possession, consumption, and being under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the Medical Center are illegal. Offenders will be discharged and may be prosecuted.
- Possession of weapons in the Medical Center is dangerous and illegal. Offenders will be discharged and may be prosecuted.
- Threats, verbal abuse or attempts at physical assault are not acceptable and are illegal. Offenders will be discharged and may be prosecuted.
- Theft or damage to government property is illegal. Offenders will be subject to fines or prosecution.

Please be aware that all patients, visitors, employees and vendors must show appropriate identification at the Police checkpoint in order to enter the VAMC grounds.

PARKING REGULATIONS

Those driving on Medical Center grounds must observe the posted speed limits and parking signs. Parking space is limited and patients' cars cannot be left during hospitalization. Since overnight parking cannot be accommodated, patients must arrange to have a relative or friend remove their vehicle. Visitors must park in designated areas and during visiting hours only. Please do not park in spaces reserved for handicapped persons without a permit. Persons who operate or park cars in violation of these regulations are subject to U.S. Court Violation notice and a fine.

NO SMOKING POLICY

The Medical Center is a '**smoke free facility**'. This policy is to help protect your health and safety and to prevent exposure of patients, visitors, and staff to second hand smoke. Smoking is also a dangerous hazard in a hospital because of the presence of gases and other flammable materials. Smoking is **prohibited** in all indoor areas and near building entrances. **You must go outside to smoke.**

Outdoor smoking shelters are available at the Medical Center. Patients should not leave a unit to use an outdoor smoking shelter without making the nursing staff aware. For patients in acute care, non-compliance with the No-Smoking policy may result in discharge.

SAFETY REGULATIONS

The safety of all patients is an important responsibility and your cooperation is needed. On occasion you may hear alarm bells for fire or disaster drills. Drills help to keep the staff prepared should a real fire occur. In the rare event of a fire or a disaster in the Medical Center, you will receive instructions from nursing and other staff. Remain calm and follow directions. For your own safety:

- Please observe all posted signs and **do not smoke** anywhere inside the Medical Center.
- Please call the nurse or other staff member if you see that another patient is in pain, confused, unsteady or has fallen.
- Please call the nurse for help when getting out of bed and never try to climb over your bed rails or walk alone in the dark or when you are feeling weak, dizzy or unsteady.
- At times, you may need special measures to prevent injury, such as putting the side rails up on your bed, or having a staff member instruct you not to get out of bed without help.
- Please use corridor handrails when walking on the unit, and be alert for other people, equipment or hazards in your path.
- Please report any spills or other safety hazards on your unit to the nursing staff. In other areas such as elevators or stairwells, ask a staff member to report spills by dialing Environmental Management Service (EMS) Ext. 7037.
- Please report any equipment, such as your bed, call button, light or TV that sparks or fails to work. Do not try to operate or repair broken equipment.
- Please do not bring in personally owned radios, televisions, or tape recorders or use any other electrical equipment that has not been approved by Engineering Service.

XV. TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS TO NORTHPORT VAMC

From the Long Island Expressway, take Exit 53N – Sunken Meadow/Sagtikos Parkway North to the last exit before the park, Exit SM5 West (25A). Proceed west on 25A approximately 2- ½ miles to a traffic light at the corner of Rinaldo Road. Turn left onto Rinaldo Road and proceed to Middleville Road. The Medical Center’s main gate is across the street, slightly to your left.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVING NORTHPORT

Local buses, the Long Island Railroad and taxicabs serve the Northport area. Please call them directly for questions and schedules. The Hart Bus Number is (631) 427 - 8287 and the Long Island Railroad general information number in Suffolk and Nassau is (516) 822-5477.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV) TRANSPORTATION

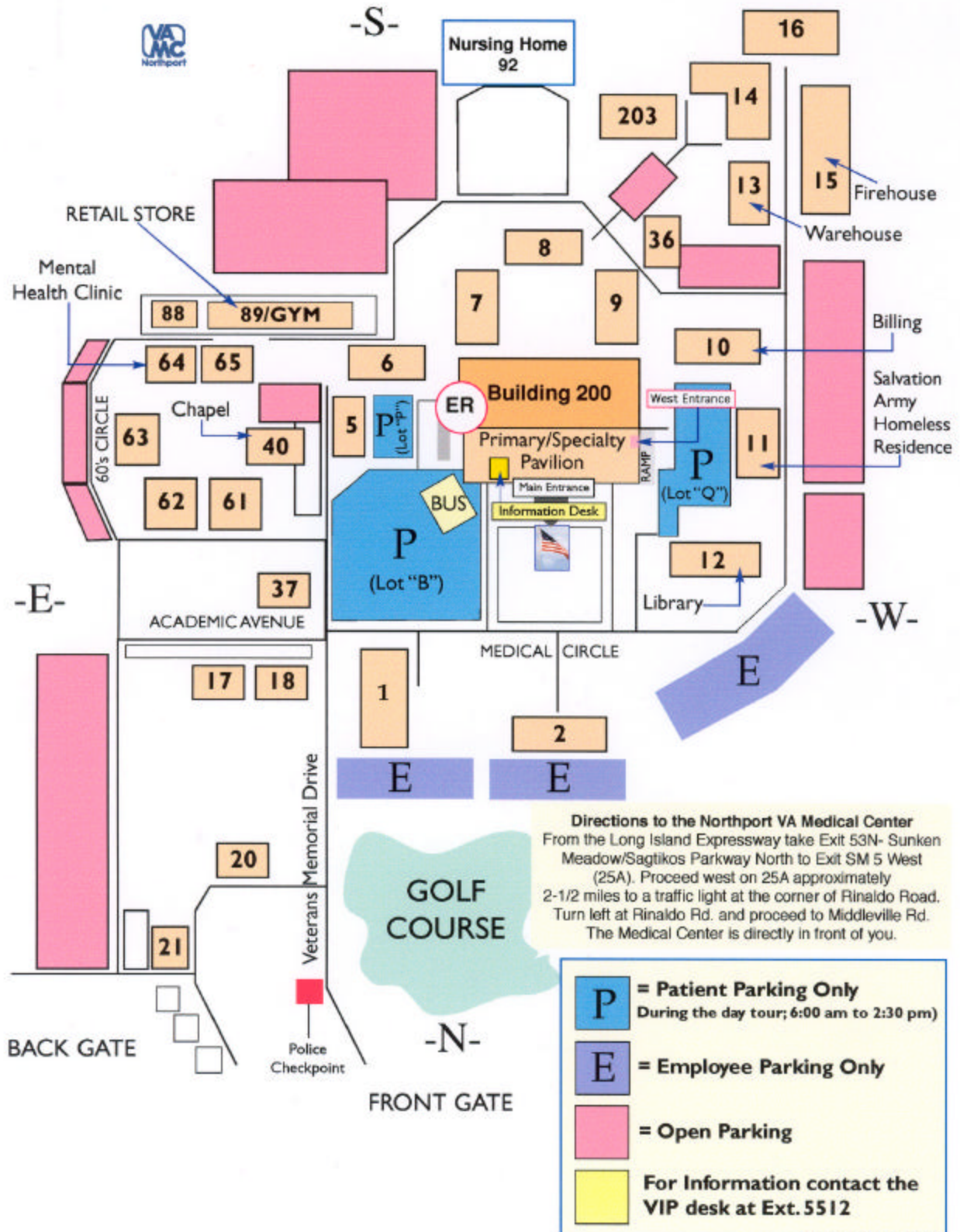
DAV Transportation at Northport is a volunteer service provided by veterans for veterans. The DAV office is located in Building 200, Room B1-36 and the telephone extensions are 7487, 7725, 7514, or call (631) 754-7980. Any veteran requesting DAV transport should call at least two (2) weeks before an appointment. **Transportation is provided for morning clinic**

appointments only. The DAV Transportation Coordinator will determine eligibility and availability of transportation. The DAV has one wheelchair van. Since space is limited, you must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance. Please call if you have any questions.

VA SHUTTLE

A wheelchair lift equipped Veteran Shuttle, staffed by volunteer veterans will transport anyone to and from Medical Center parking lots and buildings. This van circles the campus Monday – Friday from 8:30 AM to 3:15 PM, and can be signaled in transit or reached by pager 226. A staff member can assist you to call the shuttle.

Northport VA Medical Center



DR/MAC/QX4/VA/SMAP/8-01